Gepco official held in major power theft case

By Our Correspondent

GUJRAT: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested a line superintendent of the Gujranwala Electric Power Company (Gepco) for being involved in power theft.

An FIA spokesman said line superintendent Masood Ali had been arrested from Sialkot where he had given power connection of agriculture category to a private housing society after receiving a hefty amount as bribe.

The case was registered on the complaint of a resident of the area as the accused had erected high tension power cables just above the roof of his house where a minor lost his hands due to electric shock from dangling wires.

The spokesman said that the suspect had been arrested after registration of a case against him.

Meanwhile FIA Gujranwala Zone has claimed to have arrested six human traffickers involved in the visa fraud and migrant smuggling.

An FIA spokesman said that the arrests had been made from Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad and Sialkot during the crackdown against the illegal human trafficking networks in the region.

Adding, he said that the arrested suspects include Muhammad Waqar, Shakeel Ahmed, Muhammad Akhtar, Mir Ilyas, Akhtar and Sarfraz Ali.

These human traffickers, he said, had extorted Rs7.26 million from different citizens on the pretext of sending them abroad.

Rain, snowfall expected in Punjab

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab on Monday issued a weather alert warning of rain in most districts of the province from Jan 19 to 23, with heavy snowfall and rain forecast in Murree, the Galiyat and other hilly areas.

According to the PDMA, rainfall is expected in the divisions of Lahore, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Multan, Faisalabad, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur.

PDMA Director General Irfan Ali Kathia directed all relevant departments to remain on high alert and ensure that precautionary arrangements are completed in advance.

He asked the district administration and departments in Murree to stay vigilant, particularly due to the possibility of heavy snowfall.

Emergency control rooms have been instructed to keep staff on 24-hour alert, while Rescue 1122 disaster response teams have also been placed on high alert across the province.

To facilitate tourists, facilitation centres have been established at various locations in Murree.

Citizens have been advised to follow precautionary measures and avoid unnecessary travel during adverse weather conditions.

In case of any emergency, the public has been urged to contact the PDMA Punjab helpline at 1129.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast cold and dry weather over most districts of Punjab on Tuesday. Very cold and partly cloudy conditions are expected in Murree, Galiyat and surrounding areas, while Kashmir is likely to experience very cold and cloudy weather.

The PMD has also warned that shallow to moderate fog may persist during night hours in several districts, including Sialkot, Narowal, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Okara, Pakpattan, Kasur, Khanewal, Faisalabad, Multan, Kot Addu, Bahawalnagar, Khanpur and Bahawalpur.

According to the PMD, the weather during the past 24 hours remained very cold and dry in Kashmir and across Punjab, with frost reported at isolated places in Kashmir.

No rainfall was recorded in Kashmir or anywhere in Punjab during the same period.

Kite string injures motorcyclist

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A young motorcyclist received injuries to his throat with the string of a stray kite in the Shadbagh area early on Monday.

Identified as 24-year-old Bilal Aslam, the man was going on his motorcycle at 3am when the string entangled around his neck, leaving a deep cut to his throat, near Tokewala Chowk.

A Rescue 1122 spokesperson said the injured man was rushed to the Mayo Hospital where he underwent a minor procedure and his condition was stated to be normal.

The police have launched an investigation into the incident.

LAHORE: After the removal of encroachments in Urdu Bazaar, vendors sell schoolbags carrying them on their shoulders. — White Star

Punjab claims supply of 0.85m metric tonnes of wheat to provinces

PTI Kissan Wing rejects claim; says only smuggled staple reaches province

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab government claims to have supplied 850,000 metric tonnes of wheat to other provinces, of which a major chunk has been provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Punjab Director Food Amjad Hafeez says transportation of wheat is being carried out through a transparent permit system and the total estimated inter-provincial movement of wheat from Punjab stands between 1.4 and 1.5 million metric tonnes, while more than 700,000 metric tonnes have been supplied to Islamabad alone.

He clarified that there were no restrictions on the movement of wheat within Punjab, and inter-district transportation was fully allowed without any quota or administrative barriers. He explained that wherever a permit system was in place, it served only as a facilitative and monitoring mechanism to compile accurate data, discourage hoarding and profiteering, and support evidence-based policy making. "The system is not intended to disrupt trade or markets," he added.

He claimed that allegations regarding restrictions on wheat transportation were baseless and contrary to ground realities. He said the government was utilising all available resources to ensure national food security and price stability.

He, however, said measures were being taken to curb hoarding and profiteering, while protecting the interests of farmers and consumers remained a top priority of the government.Meanwhile, PTI Punjab Kissan Wing general secretary MPA Ejaz Shafi has rejected the food director's claim that Punjab had given any wheat quota to the KP and only smuggled wheat reached the province.

He said the wheat price had risen to Rs5,000 per 40kg and if Punjab had supplied wheat to KP and Sindh, the prices could have risen to Rs10,000 per 40kg.

He lamented that hoarders, allegedly belonging to the incumbent government, had bought wheat from farmers at Rs1,800 to Rs2,000 per 40kg and hoarded the staple, now selling at more than the double prices in a matter of three to four months.

"The government pushed poor farmers against the wall during harvesting season and now the poor are compelled to purchase flour and roti at higher rates," he said.

29 gangsters court arrest during Katcha crackdown

By Our Correspondent

DERA GHAZI KHAN: In a breakthrough during the ongoing police operation in the Katcha (riverine) area, 29 'most-wanted' gangsters surrendered to the authorities, District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Imran claimed on Monday.

Among those who laid down their arms are leaders of various criminal gangs. The surrendered individuals include the notorious gangster Wahab Lound, who carried head money of Rs10 million and another gangster, Shahid Lound, who was wanted for a reward of Rs5m.

DPO Imran said the surrendered gangsters were wanted in multiple cases, including the martyrdom of police personnel, murder, kidnapping for ransom, and armed robbery. He assured that the apprehended outlaws would be prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law.

This latest development brings the total number of bandits who have surrendered in the Katcha operation to 29, as 11 other gangsters had already courted arrest along with their weapons the other day.

The police operation continues on a large scale in the Katcha Karachi and Katcha Umrani regions of tehsil Rujhan Mazari of Rajanpur district. DPO Imran said drones are being utilised to target the gangsters' hideouts. So far, seven such hideouts have been destroyed in the operation, and several gangsters have been critically injured.

A clear message has been issued by RPO Dera Ghazi Khan Azher Akram and DPO Imran that gangsters must surrender or face relentless police action.

INDUS DOLPHIN: The wildlife lovers have urged the Punjab government to hold an on-site inquiry, take strict action against those involved, ban fishing during low water levels, and ensure regular patrolling and rescue operations to protect the rare Indus Dolphin.

A rare Indus Dolphin was found dead last week near Taunsa Barrage in District Kot Addu, raising serious concerns over illegal fishing practices in the Indus.

Social environmental organisation Sindhu Bachao Tarla has alleged that fish contractors are using poison and electric current, posing grave threats to the endangered species, especially during the low water flow season.

According to Khadim Hussain Khar of the organisation, the dolphin's body was discovered after three days and reported to the Wildlife Department, which later conducted a post-mortem examination.

Objection to plea of Bushra's daughter upheld

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Monday sustained an office objection to a petition of territorial jurisdiction on a petition by a daughter of incarcerated Bushra Bibi, the wife of PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, against Adiala Jail authorities for not allowing her to visit her mother.

The registrar office had objected to the maintainability of the petition, asking the petitioner, Mubashra Maneka, to approach the Rawalpindi bench of the high court.

Justice Farooq Haider took up the petition and sustained the office objection.

The judge observed that the petition was not maintainable at the principal seat, Lahore.

The judge disposed of a petition after the petitioner's counsel withdrew the plea.

The petition, filed through Lahore High Court Bar Association's president Malik Asif Nissoana, pointed out that the Adiala Jail administration had barred the meeting without providing any written reason to the petitioner.

It said, despite being a blood relation and Tuesday being the designated day for meetings, permission was not granted to the petitioner to visit her jailed mother.

It pleaded that the petitioner, being a daughter of Bushra Bibi, is deeply concerned about her physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

The petition argued that the actions of the jail authorities amounted to mala fide intent and misuse of authority.

It asked the court to issue directions to the respondents for an immediate meeting with her mother.

Bushra Bibi is serving a seven-year sentence in the £190 million corruption case.

Five dead in fog-related road crashes

Dawn Report

TOBA TEK SINGH/NAROWAL: At least five persons, including a schoolchild died, while eight other children were injured in two separate traffic accidents due to poor visibility caused by dense fog on Monday.

In the first incident, a school van and a bus collided head-on with each other on Buchekey Road, Nankan Sahib, during dense fog in the area.

As a result, the van driver, Asghar (35) and a schoolchild, Turab Ali (15), died on the spot, while eight other schoolchildren were injured.

The injured children were shifted to the Nankana Sahib DHQ Hospital, where Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Tasleem Akhtar Rao inquired after them.

The DC directed the medical superintendent to ensure the provision of the best available treatment to the injured children.

After the accident, an emergency was declared in the hospital.

An official said that three of the injured students, Ghulam Fareed (14), Amer (18) and Adeel (19), who were in a critical condition, have been referred to a Lahore hospital for treatment.

In the other incident, three men died when a trailer loaded with iron rods overturned due to heavy fog in Sialkot.

According to Sialkot Rescue 1122 spokesperson, a trailer carrying iron rods overturned near Musapur stop on the Pasrur-Daska road, when the driver could not keep the vehicle on the road due to the poor visibility caused by heavy fog in the area.

As a result, three men who were on the trailer, fell and got trapped under the vehicle.

He said that on being informed of the incident, Rescue 1122 teams immediately reached the spot and pulled out the critically injured men, identified as Ali Raza (25), Arshad (40) and Afzal (45), from under the trailer with the help of locals and heavy machinery.

The rescuers provided first aid to the injured on the spot, but all of them succumbed to their injuries on the spot.

On receiving information about the accident, the local police also reached the spot. The rescue team completed the legal formalities and shifted the bodies to the government hospital.

Bikes sans 'safety rods' to be banned on Basant

District admin to install 50,000 to 60,000 rods daily on bikes at 100 'road safety camps'

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Commissioner Lahore Marryam Khan says three-day 'Mehfooz Basant' will be held on Feb 6, 7, 8, in the limits of Lahore district only.

She was holding a meeting regarding the Basant festival in Lahore. The meeting was attended by six associations, including the All Pakistan Kite Flying Association.

The commissioner issued strict instructions to the district administration to make Basant safe, saying that kite flying was not not allowed before Feb 6.

She said kite flying material manufacturing would be allowed only in Lahore district while the sale of kites and strings in the city would also start Feb 1 and end on Feb 8. She ordered the district administration to take strict action against violations.

Ms Khan said that for Mahfooz Basant, one million safety rods would be installed on motorcycles from the Road Safety Campand during the three-day basant, no motorcycle would come on the roads of Lahore without safety rods. Under the Kite Flying Ordinance 2025, motorcyclists will be required to install safety wires/rods, she added.

In the meeting, the Lahore district administration briefed the commissioner, saying that there is a complete ban on kite flying in Lahore at present and so far 204 cases had been registered against the violators. It said road safety camps would be activated in Lahore within 24 to 48 hours, and safety rods would be installed on 50,000 to 60,000 motorcycles daily from 100 road safety camps in the city.

The commissioner said, "Online registration of manufacturers, traders, sellers is going on the 'e-Biz' app and licenses are being cleared in three days."

She added that only registered manufacturers, traders and sellers would be allowed to do business and all of them were required to display their no objection certificates (NOCs). She urged the associations to play their role for a 'safe Basant'.

During the Basant festival, she said, all departments would be supporting the district administration and police, taking every step to protect citizens but citizens should also play their key role to make it safe. The meeting was attended by Yousaf Salahuddin, RPO Sheikhupura Range, Lahore Police Administration, DCs Lahore Division, DPOs Lahore Division, ADCG, ACG, AC City and other officers.

Earlier, the commissioner chaired a pre-promotion committee meeting of employees of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). She said a board had been formed for promotion of 35 board officers and employees for four categories.